



# NOTES FROM THE:

## Air Force Accounting and Finance Office

by Colonel Martha M. Beatty

The AFAFO completed its first year on 1 October 1999. The year was full of challenges and opportunities and it has gone by rapidly. In our first year our focus was primarily on auditable financial statements (tri-annual review) and internal control and quality assurance initiatives. We are convinced that our second year will be even more challenging than the first.

A number of issues are on our scope as we enter the new year. First among them is to reacquaint ourselves with a longstanding military tradition: using the chain of command to solve problems. Over the years of consolidation and downsizing it seems we moved towards working problems direct between Financial Services Offices (FSOs) and Operating Locations (OPLOCs) and didn't involve the MAJCOM as much as they should have been. Nor was there an AFAFO to assist in problem resolution. Now that we have been in place a year, we see a need to ensure that MAJCOMs have an opportunity to address FSO requests for assistance in solving problems, obtaining training, etc., and that MAJCOMs elevate their problems to the AFAFO as necessary. Many times we are finding that FSOs are frustrated because of their inability to get assistance from an OPLOC, but they haven't elevated the problem through the proper channels either at the base, the MAJCOM, or within the OPLOC. Many of our FSO staffs are young and inexperienced and we need to help them understand how to make this process work for them.

LES via e-mail is being tested during the November 1999 through January 2000 time period at DFAS-Denver, the Air Force Academy, and within USAFE. Approximately 150 persons at each location will participate. If the test goes well, full implementation will probably occur in early to mid-2000.

Employee/Member Self Service (E/MSS) is an initiative affecting both military members (active, reserve, retired), annuitants, and civilian employees. The Beta testing was in November/December 1999 for all except the active duty and reserve members with implementation following in early

to mid-2000. Testing and implementation for the active and reserve forces will occur closer to mid-2000. This will be a great help to both the individual and the FSOs, saving the individual time and reducing FSO workload.

The tri-annual review received a tremendous amount of attention and effort in FY99. A lot of great work was done and some \$1.2 billion was deobligated. We need to continue the momentum in FY00. The tri-annual review process is changing this year to focus on high dollars. In addition to the tri-annual review, a list of dormant obligations and MORDs will be sent each review period for the FSO to research and resolve. This is a difficult task and will require the combined efforts of the FSO, FM, Budget Office, Resource Advisors, and SPOs to get it done. A guide covering the review process has been completed and sent to the MAJCOMs on 9 November 1999. We ask that you review it and that base level FMs and Budget Officers get involved with the FSO to keep the focus on cleaning up old problems and ensuring the accounting records are as accurate as possible.

As we continue the pursuit of accurate accounting records and auditable financial statements, several things must be part of our focus. These are Problem Disbursements, the Tri-annual Review, Reimbursement Programs, Working Capital Funds, Chief Financial Officer's Act, and Improved Quality of Reporting. Some of these involve the OPLOCs as well as the FSOs and in other cases the OPLOCs are primarily responsible. However, it is important that we keep in mind that it takes all of us, both the Air Force and the DFAS players, to make the financial management process work. Maintaining a solid partnership is the key to success.

We are looking forward to the new opportunities that will come our way in the new millenium and to continuing our great association with the MAJCOMs staffs.